

The Blue Dog Coalition today announced its official endorsement of H.R. 1325, The AMERICA Works Act, legislation that ensures workers have the skills America's manufacturers need to compete. As Chair and Vice-Chair of the Blue Dog Task Force on Economic Growth, Donnelly and Boren are leading the Coalition's efforts to promote common sense, middle-of-the-road policies that promote job growth and economic recovery.

"American workers are second to none, largely because of our ability to adapt to changing demands. As the needs of our economy and job creators evolve, we need to be sure we're providing our workers with the skills and talents they need to be successful in the marketplace," said Congressman John Barrow (D-GA), Blue Dog Co-Chair for Policy. "I look forward to working with my Blue Dog colleagues to continue promoting smart, common-sense, and bipartisan ideas like these that will help get Americans back to work and keep our economy moving forward."

"I've heard from employers and education providers alike that we need to do a better job of matching skilled workers with those looking to hire them," said Congressman Donnelly. "This legislation would better prepare American workers and keep our manufacturers competitive in the global marketplace by ensuring that workforce training programs are teaching to the needs of our employers and are issuing recognized, portable credentials. Our workforce can't be beat, but there needs to be a more streamlined way of categorizing and credentialing specific skills so that we can more efficiently connect skilled job seekers with the employers who need them."

"Job creation and economic growth must be the top priorities of this Congress," said Congressman Boren. "That is why I am pleased to collaborate with Congressman Donnelly on this important legislation to enhance the capabilities of the American work force. The AMERICA Works Act will focus federal resources for worker training and education programs that help develop the type of skill-sets that are demanded most in today's economy. As vice-chair of the Blue Dog Task Force for Economic Growth, I will continue to work with my fellow Blue Dogs to propose ideas that will restore America to economic prosperity."

Despite the nation's continued high unemployment rate, access to skilled labor is a repeated concern of manufacturers nationwide. The AMERICA Works Act would require the U.S. Department of Labor to create a registry of skill credentials and prioritize existing federal resources under the Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, the Workforce Investment Act, and Trade Adjustment Assistance workforce training programs so that they better support education and training for those credentials.

“Putting our economy back on track and creating jobs for hardworking Americans should be the number one priority of this Congress,” said Congressman Mike Ross (D-AR), Blue Dog Co-Chair for Communications. “The Blue Dogs will continue to work with America’s manufacturing industry to develop new and innovative ways to make sure our work force has the skills necessary to succeed in today’s economy.”

“With the U.S. manufacturing sector on the rise for the first time in decades, it’s more important than ever for skilled workers to have the training and education they need to compete and innovate,” said Congressman Heath Shuler (D-NC), Blue Dog Co-Chair for Administration. “The AMERICA Works Act modernizes federal work programs to keep our country on the path to economic recovery and ensure American job seekers are meeting the demands of today’s manufacturing work force.”

The Blue Dog Task Force on Economic Growth is primarily focused on creating a positive economic climate geared toward bolstering growth and promoting innovation. Under the leadership of Chair Joe Donnelly (IN-02) and Vice-Chair Dan Boren (OK-02), the Task Force works to advance policies that accelerate the economic recovery, create opportunities for middle class Americans to rejoin the workforce and assist small business owners grow their companies.

###

Contact: Christopher Cashman, 202-225-2823
christopher.cashman@mail.house.gov

For Immediate Release: May 4, 2011